

CHAPTER IX

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM

THE crowning glory of Roger II.'s work is the government which he imposed upon the land that he had conquered and welded together, a government majestic, strong, and enduring. Like all great kings who have also been lawgivers, he works from the first steadily towards this end, that, the land once made subject to him and the field cleared, he may set up the strong edifice of a Constitution which shall combine power with justice. First it was necessary to expel or subdue his opponents. At the submission of 1134 and 1139, he confiscated the lands of the more dangerous of them and expelled them from Italy; thus disappeared the stubbornest of his rebels, descendants of the early conquerors. When Rainulf submitted in 1134, the King exacted from his vassals an oath like that of Salisbury in English history; probably this was done in many other cases. In 1135 a great enfeoffment of South Italy swept away most of the old families in favour of Roger's sons and loyal supporters. Finally at